

**City Council of the City of Greenville  
Work Session**

**Monday, September 13, 2021  
3:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Location:  
Greenville Convention Center, 1 Exposition Drive**

**MINUTES**

CITY COUNCIL: Councilmember John M. DeWorken, Councilmember Lillian B. Flemming, Councilmember Kenneth C. Gibson, Councilmember Wil Brasington; Councilmember Russell H. Stall; and Councilmember Dorothy H. Dowe  
Absent: Mayor Knox White

CITY STAFF: City Manager John F. McDonough; City Attorney Michael S. Pitts;  
City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Mayor Pro Tem Lillian Flemming called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matters.

**Greenville Development Code (Code of Ordinances, Chapter 19)**

Assistant City Manager Shannon Lavrin introduced representatives to provide a presentation on the Greenville Development Code as located in Council's Agenda packet. Charles Buki, President of czbLLC introduced Larry Westin of Westin Consulting, Matt Ingalls of Ingalls Planning and Design, Lee Einsweiler and Christy Dodson of Code Studio, and Thomas Eddington and Eric Arneigh of MRB Group. Mr. Buki stated the presentation provides an overview of the project, some preliminary insights, and next steps in the process.

Mr. Westin provided a recap of the August discussions and stated they plan to use the new code to facilitate change where it makes sense and to provide the best version of the City.

Mr. Ingalls commended City Council and staff with moving forward with the implementation of GVL2040. Mr. Ingalls provided information on what the development code process will require of the community including replacement of the current land management ordinance and engineering design and specifications manual, accepting higher densities in specific locations to absorb certain growth, and to strengthening existing residential neighborhoods preserving when possible. Mr. Ingalls stated by the end of this project they hope to have current rules and reviews substantially altered, the new code established to what the community supports, and predictability and transparency as the norm.

Councilmember Stall asked, "what the Greenville way is" and what is the "it" Greenville may potentially lose. Mr. Einsweiler responded that the phrase is used when people are unhappy, however, there is no way for someone to express what that means. Mr. Einsweiler stated he believes it is respectable dialogue and the quality brought in the downtown area, among other things. Mr. Einsweiler referred to working with the City Manager in Sandy Springs and to work performed specifically around the southeast area. Mr. Einsweiler advised that in many cases they create a re-think kind of a plan for the municipality and that they are known for the user friendliness of their documents.

Mr. Einsweiler commented on the preliminary findings including an initial review of the Code and process, staff discussions, and stakeholder discussions. Mr. Einsweiler stated zoning can give you a good building; a good developer can give you a great building. Mr. Einsweiler shared areas of improvement including (1) approvals taking too long, (2) little predictability in process or outcome, (3) development code being outdated and no longer the right tool for the job, and (4) lack of clarity, subjective interpretation, or both, which make it difficult to know what is allowed.

Mr. Einsweiler stated land development is the number one sign of a broken code and advised when there is a new modern code, the development community tends to follow the rules in the book. Mr. Einsweiler also stated if there is a need early on for variances, you probably need to change the rules in the book.

Councilmember Gibson asked what process will be in place to allow citizens and the community to assist with the development of the code. Mr. Einsweiler responded he believes that small area planning groups will assist. Mr. Einsweiler stated plan making and rulemaking are the two processes and if the residents get the vision, then they will understand as the initial project arrives.

Councilmember Stall stated he believes Greenville should aspire to make every building great and to have that aspirational vision moving forward. Councilmember Dowe stated it is unacceptable when what is permitted is not what is built. Councilmember Flemming commented on community experiences and expressed how the process should be the same for everyone. Mr. Einsweiler responded there is currently a lot of interpretation instead of following the rules. Mr. Einsweiler stated that part of their scope will be training and implementation of processes.

Regarding the next steps, Mr. Eddington stated they will continue with (1) performing outreach to developers, residents, other stakeholders, (2) preliminary determination of approach to new code, and (3) initial recommendations for small area plan candidates. Mr. Eddington stated they anticipate returning to Council on November 8 to provide recommendations of direction on proposed approach and proposal for small area planning. Councilmember Gibson asked if the group will be developing a unique code for each node? Mr. Eddington responded they will identify each of the nodes and determine similar characteristics and then determine which area falls into which node.

In closing, Ms. Lavrin provided an 18-month time line of the project and reminded everyone that since February, Council has adopted the Comprehensive Plan, adopted a Consistency Policy, and authorized an appropriation for this project.

### **Business License Ordinance Update**

Budget Director Matt Efirm provided a presentation on changes to the Business License Ordinance as located in Council's Agenda packet. Mr. Efirm stated the City is responding to state regulatory changes and discussed what changes are taking place, the existing and proposed classes and rates, impact to city businesses, economic development incentives, and the next steps and timeline for implementation. Mr. Efirm stated that revenues have made up about one quarter of the General Fund budget over the last 10 years. Mr. Efirm advised that a state-run online renewal portal and a standardized appeals process has been established and that the statewide renewal date will now be April 30, while the City's renewal in the past has been February 28. Mr. Efirm added that the City will still have its portal in place.

Councilmember Brasington asked what the financial impact is involving the change in the renewal date, and Mr. Efirid responded it does not impact the City significantly. Mr. Efirid stated that as part of the renewal date adjustment, businesses will receive a two-month extension. Councilmember Dowe asked what it is costing the City to have two portals. Mr. Efirid responded the City's portal allows for the capture of additional information and data that is not collected through the state-wide portal. Mr. Efirid advised the state-wide portal has not been launched yet.

Mr. Efirid stated for the City to comply it must (1) repeal and replace the existing Business License Ordinance with the Municipal Association of South Carolina model ordinance, (2) reclassify all businesses by NAICS Code and 2021 Standard Class schedule, (3) rebalance rate structure to prevent windfall or loss relative to 2020 revenue, (4) notify businesses of new business license class, rate and timeline changes, and (5) complete the process by December 31, 2021. Mr. Efirid compared the City's class and rate structure to the proposed class and rate structure. Mr. Efirid stated that under the new structure, approximately 85% percent of the licensed businesses will see a reduce fee and approximately 15% percent will see an increased fee.

In an effort to address the increased business fees, Mr. Efirid presented a proposed economic development incentive as a targeted business license and building permit rebate grant program. Mr. Efirid provided a summary of businesses to target with the program including new and existing businesses with certain areas of focus. Councilmember Dowe challenged staff to encourage grocery stores to locate where there are food deserts in the City.

Councilmember Stall asked if there is any proposed incentive for businesses after the five-year incentive. Mr. Efirid responded staff has presented a proposed baseline structure and that adjustments can be made at Council's request. Regarding corridors, Councilmember Brasington asked for assistance in helping businesses who cannot financially afford certain corridors to have an opportunity to relocate to those corridors to increase diversity. Councilmember Brasington requested projections of some businesses as examples to determine the extent of the impact on their businesses.

Mr. Efirid stated the next steps are to continue to rewrite the business license ordinance with a target for adoption in October 2021 and to allow 30-60 days of public notice and communications before normal renewal deadline in January.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS  
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on September 10, 2021